

AGENDA ITEM IV A 2

PROPOSED LETTER OF INTENT

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA - MONROE

B.S. IN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Letters of Intent

Prior to the submittal of a proposal for a new academic program, a college/university must submit a Letter of Intent for assessment and approval. Letters of Intent serve two related purposes: 1) they allow the Board of Regents to decide whether campuses should continue to plan for the development of new academic programs; and 2) they serve to coordinate statewide the development of new academic programs. Letters of Intent **do not** serve as the mechanism to determine need, review curricula, assess resources, or approve a budget. These processes are accomplished during the full program proposal review.

Colleges and universities shall transmit Letters of Intent to the Commissioner of Higher Education for all new programs to be proposed, with the exception of proposed undergraduate programs below the baccalaureate level.

Procedures and timelines for Letters of Intent are as follows:

- 1. A Letter of Intent may be filed at any time.**
- 2. A separate document must be prepared for each projected program.**
- 3. Letters of Intent will be scheduled for consideration by the Board of Regents within ninety days (90) after receipt of documentation.**
- 4. A full program proposal may be submitted ninety (90) days after a Letter of Intent has been approved by the Board of Regents.**
- 5. Letters of Intent are valid for three years after approval by the Board of Regents. Upon expiration of this time period, a new Letter of Intent must be submitted.**

The following factors will be considered in assessing Letters of Intent:

- 1. The program must be within the role and scope of the institution.**
- 2. The program must not be needlessly duplicative of those at other institutions of higher education.**
- 3. The program shall be consistent with the mandates of the desegregation Settlement Agreement.**
- 4. The program shall adhere to specific criteria for funding. More specifically,**

the Board of Regents shall not approve planning for a new academic program unless the prospective program meets certain funding criteria. (See “Staff Analysis” section below)

Program Description

Per this Letter of Intent, the University of Louisiana-Monroe (ULM) seeks Board of Regents’ approval to submit a program proposal for a Bachelor of Science degree program in Instructional Design. This is not, as its title might suggest, a degree program that leads to some sort of teacher certification in educational technology. Rather, the following definition from the U.S. Department of Education Classification of Instructional Programs: 2000 Edition applies:

Educational/Instruction Media Design - A program that focuses on the principles and techniques of creating instructional products and related educational resources in various formats or combinations such as film, video, recording, text. Art, CD-ROM, computer software, virtual reality technology, and three dimensional objects, and that prepares individuals to function as instructional media designers. Includes instruction in the techniques specific to creating in various media, the behavioral principles applicable to using various media in learning and teaching, the design/testing/production of instructional materials, and the management of educational/instructional media facilities and programs.

ULM notes that there are over 100 Instructional Designers jobs currently advertised in Louisiana. Typical job titles include: Multimedia Education Specialist; Learning Designer; Instructional Designer; E-Learning Specialist; Distance Learning System Support Specialist; Technical Writer/Editor; and Training Specialist. From these job titles, it is easy to comprehend the usefulness of such personnel in both educational and non-educational settings.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Board of Regents follows established criteria in evaluating Letters of Intent, as described in the “Background” section of this agenda item. The following four issues are primary considerations:

1. The program must be within the role and scope of the institution.

According to *Role, Scope, and Mission Statements* of the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education: 2001, the projected program is consistent with the stated role, scope, and mission of the University.

2. The program must not be needlessly duplicative of those at other institutions of higher education.

The staff notes that there are no such other programs offered at state colleges and universities. Related M.Ed. programs in Educational Technology, but these programs are both at a higher

educational level and designed for certification purposes only. Accordingly, the staff concludes that unnecessary duplication is not a relevant issue.

3. The program shall be consistent with the mandates of the Desegregation Settlement Agreement.

As the 1994 Desegregation Settlement Agreement makes no mention of any degree in Instructional Design within its prescribed list of required new programs, desegregation issues are not a relevant concern.

4. The program shall adhere to specific criteria for funding.

Recalling acceptable financial criteria as stated in the Letter of Intent policy:

The Board of Regents shall not approve planning for a new academic program unless the prospective program meets one or more of criteria 1-5 below:

- 1. The program will be formulated through a reorganization of existing courses, requiring no additional State expenditures for at least five years (for example, new options or concentrations in existing programs).**
- 2. The program will be funded by concomitant reductions in expenditures, requiring no additional State expenditures for at least five years (for example, programs funded by the reallocation of resources from terminated or consolidated programs).**
- 3. The program will be funded entirely through non-State monies for a period of five years.**
- 4. The program will demonstrably promote economic development in the State.**
- 5. The program is deemed indispensable to fulfilling the role, scope, and mission of the university or college and is deemed indispensable to fulfilling critical educational needs of the State.**

The University claims that additional costs will be limited to support for one new FT and one new PT faculty at around \$60K/year, plus about \$15K for updated equipment in Years 1 and 4. These monies will be provided from existing University revenues.

The University notes in this proposal:

This program fully meets Items 2 and 5. The program will be funded by concomitant reductions in expenditures....and is indispensable to fulfilling the role, scope, and mission of the University and to fulfilling critical education needs in the State.

STAFF SUMMARY

The proposed program is well within the role, scope, and mission of the University. Program duplication is not a problem and desegregation issues are not relevant. Costs do not appear to be

a concern at this point, but this issue cannot be conclusively resolved without a full proposal review. Given these circumstances, the staff tenders the following recommendation:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant approval for the proposed Letter of Intent for the projected B.S. Program in Instructional Design (CIP Code 13.0501) at the University of Louisiana-Monroe. Any forthcoming proposal as a result of this Letter of Intent shall address possible funding concerns as expressed in the staff summary.